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Watching the Watcher

★ APPOINTMENT of John A. McCone to replace Allen W. Dulles as director of the Central Intelligence Agency could and should be a step toward limiting that powerful instrument to its proper function and bringing it into a responsible relationship with the other functions of a democratic government. Many Americans have felt since its inception that the C.I.A. is not sufficiently limited or responsible, that it is not adequately geared into our free institutions. And their fears gained confirmation when they learned of its role in organizing the Cuban invasion fiasco of last April. Appointment of new leadership offers the President and Congress an opportunity to clarify the role of the C.I.A.

Mr. Dulles' successor is a Republican, which should indicate the administration's intention to lift the agency to a level above partisanship. Mr. McCone's record as head of the Atomic Energy Commission and his service in other governmental capacities show that he is the kind of administrator needed by an important instrument of government. He should make short work of correcting the agency's proved inefficiencies. But it remains to be seen whether his appointment indicates that the administration intends to limit the C.I.A. to its proper functions as an intelligence agency.

Now is the time to withdraw the C.I.A. from all activities which create foreign policy. This is the function of the department of state, operating under the President. The C.I.A. should be limited, and the country should know it is limited, to gathering and evaluating intelligence information. So long as it retains operational functions, it can present the state department with a *fait accompli* which distorts and manipulates foreign policy. The Cuban debacle will be a total loss if the lesson it taught results in limiting the C.I.A. to the one function named in its title.

In addition, the C.I.A. should, as we have previously urged, be brought under the supervision of a joint congressional committee. The Atomic Energy Commission, which Mr. McCone once headed, operates under congressional supervision. Both agencies have an element of secrecy in their operation. Mr. McCone should be selected by experience to direct the C.I.A. and to report to a committee. Where great power, enormous responsibilities, and important responsibilities are concerned, government should operate under the supervision of the people's representatives.

Senator Mansfield's proposal to put the C.I.A. under a congressional committee should relieve the state department of the frustrations and embarrassments it suffered from Allen Dulles' highly personalized direction of the C.I.A. It will assure the people that the making of foreign policy is in the hands of government officials in whom the Constitution rests that responsibility. But one thing more is required. Congress, which established the C.I.A. in the National Security act of 1947, opened the door for the agency to engage in operational in addition to intelligence activities. It is therefore incumbent upon Congress to close the door it opened and upon the administration to recommend that Congress act in such manner. Otherwise the C.I.A.'s new administrator is likely to find his administration as beset with pitfalls as was that of Mr. Dulles.

Synod Sustains McCrackin

★ THE PERMANENT judicial commission of the United Presbyterian, U.S.A., synod of Ohio on September 19, 1961, sustained the appeal of Maurice F. McCrackin. The judgment disclaimed any endorsement of McCrackin's position and withheld comment on his right to hold such a position and his method in implementing it. But on grounds consistent with the highest principles of the church's constitution the commission found the verdict against McCrackin unjust and the censure too severe. The case was returned to the presbytery of Cincinnati for retrial and the presbytery was advised that "prosecution for an alleged offense shall commence within one year from the time of its alleged commission or from the date when it was reported to the judicatory which has jurisdiction thereof."

The judgment by the Ohio synod's permanent judicial commission is correct and laudable. It was not the duty of that commission to retry Mr. McCrackin; its duty was to serve—as prescribed by the church's constitution—as an "appellate judicatory" and as such to determine whether Mr. McCrackin had been justly tried and, if so, had been fairly sentenced. In this capacity the commission found the trial unjust and the punishment too severe.

Presbyterians and others who sensed the injustice of McCrackin's trial by the presbytery of Cincinnati will not only have these feelings confirmed by the decision of the Ohio synod's permanent judicial com-